

Davis is a happy Panther

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Carolina Panthers went shopping for top of the line cornerback. Eric Davis went shopping for a new team.

They found a perfect fit Tuesday.

Davis, an all-pro with the San Francisco 49ers, signed as an unrestricted free agent with the Panthers, ending Carolina's search for a young cornerback to pair with second-year pro Tyrone Poole. As the third free agent to sign with the Panthers - tight end Wesley Walls (New Orleans) and Greg Skrepenak (Oakland) - Davis found an end to the courting in Carolina.

"It was a good fit," Davis said. "It's just a question of playing football now. This whole process is behind me and I'm very happy to be a Carolina Panther."

Davis' deal is worth \$11.4 million over four years. It includes a \$3 million signing bonus and base salaries of \$2 million over the next three seasons before bumping up to \$2.4 million in the fourth. Walls signed for \$4 million, including a \$1.4 million signing bonus.

Panthers officials see Davis as the perfect compliment to Poole at cornerback in coach Dom Capers' 3-4 defensive scheme. Both are aggressive and can cover receivers man-to-man, a necessity due to Carolina's penchant for blitzing. Davis, who has 292 tackles, 12 interceptions, 81 passes defended and five forced fumbles in regular season play, brings a championship mentality as well as considerable skills, to his new team.

"We are thrilled to have Eric join the Panthers," Carolina general manager Bill Polian said. "He brings us not only all-pro credentials as a player, but also a Super Bowl-winning attitude. We feel we've significantly upgraded our defense with the acquisition of Eric."

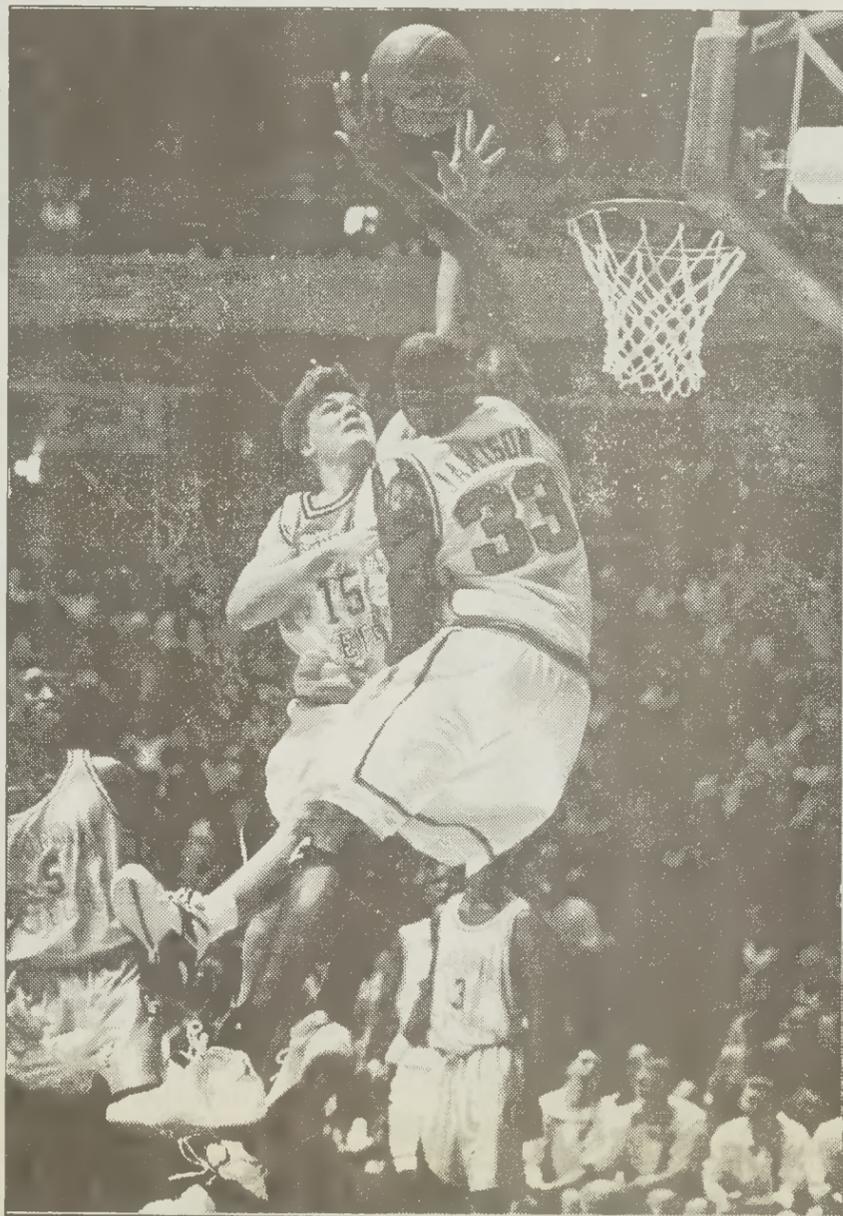
Davis, 5-11 and 178 pounds, was San Francisco's second-round draft choice in 1990 out of Jacksonville (Ala.) State. He started 65 of 81 games for the 49ers, including 63 of 64

See PANTHERS Page 10B



CAPERS

UNC'S CHARLOTTE CONNECTION



PHOTOS/WADE NASH

Former Providence High standout Antawn Jamison has 10 triple-doubles as a North Carolina freshman, one of the top marks in school history.

McInnis and Jamison prime time Tar Heels

By Wade Nash
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

With the loss of Jerry Stackhouse and Rasheed Wallace, Atlantic Coast Conference basketball observers assumed North Carolina would fall into the lower half of the conference.

They were wrong. With only a few weeks remaining in the regular season, Charlotte natives Jeff McInnis and Antwan Jamieson have the Heels in their usual place: contending for a title.

McInnis and Jamison are both having all-conference seasons and have been the driving forces behind the Tar Heels 18-8 season.

McInnis vaulted into the starting position last year, starting 31 games and playing in 34. With Stackhouse and Wallace drawing most of the attention, McInnis averaged 12.4 points, 4.1 rebounds and 5.3 per game. Without the NBA lottery picks, McInnis has stepped up his



Former West Charlotte star Jeff McInnis has improved his offensive production.

game and is a top candidate for first team All-ACC honors. At 6-4 and 190 pounds, the former West Charlotte star is a tough

See TAR HEELS Page 10B

Junior partners have Latin Hawks soaring

By Karl Petraroja
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

After winning the state girls' basketball title last year, Charlotte Latin still has some unfinished business.

The Hawks have picked up right where they left off in their quest for back-to-back independent schools championships with a 20-2 record, including 9-1 in the CISAA. They don't look to be slowing down as the playoffs near, riding the efforts of three juniors: forwards Janae Whiteside and Tonya Phifer, and point guard

Rachel Lewis.

"I just don't want our team to rest on our laurels because we still have to go out there and play everynight because teams aren't going to let us come out and beat them, we have to play to the best of our ability," Phifer said.

"Our season wouldn't be complete I guess, unless we win the state championship," says Lewis.

"If we didn't win, that would be a real letdown," Whiteside said.

It sounds as if the Hawks are

See HAWKS Page 10B



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Tonya Phifer, Janae Whiteside and Rachel Lewis (left to right).

Va. Union tries for fifth CIAA crown

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The 51st CIAA basketball tournament has the familiar subplots and one burning question:

Can anyone beat Virginia Union? The Panthers, who have won four straight tournament titles, try for the fifth next week in Winston-Salem. Union, ranked first in the nation with a 21-1 record, is the team to beat. Coach Dave Robbins' team has size and a superior backcourt, something that no one else can consistently boast. Despite stumbling last week at Norfolk State, the Panthers are odds-on favorites to not only win in Winston-Salem, but to go on to Springfield, Mass and take the national championship.

Norfolk State, playing in its last CIAA tournament before moving on to Division I status, can make a run at Union. The Spartans have an experienced crew and a veteran coach in Mike Bernard who has big game experience and a national championship at N.C. Central to his credit. Central, the Southern Division champion, could make noise. The Eagles' trademark defense now has an up-tempo offense to go along with it. Lavelle Moton is one of the league's best shooting guard and a leader on the court.

Johnson C. Smith is stuck in the middle of a four-game losing streak after Tuesday's setback at Savannah State. The Golden Bulls lead the CIAA in field goal percentage with better than 50 percent shooting, but don't have the depth or experience to play consistently good ball. Melvin Abrams, the league's leading scorer at 20.4 points per game is close to Moton's level when he's on, and forward Wesley Tubbs has come on of late, pushing his scoring average to 17.2 points per game.

Smith's strength is its backcourt, where Abrams joins Frank Wilson and Erasto Hatchett in the lineup. The Bulls will go as far

See CIAA Page 11B

Judge me by my statistics, Giants slugger demands

By Rob Gloster
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. - Barry Bonds wants to be judged by his statistics, not by his words or his deeds off the field or the public perception of him.

And based on those statistics, the San Francisco Giants left fielder says, "there ain't too many players better than I am in baseball."

Despite playing with a hairline fracture of his right wrist for the last few weeks of the 1995 season and being emotionally drained by a messy divorce, Bonds put up some exceptional numbers last year.

He hit .294 with 33 homers, 104 RBIs and 109 runs scored. He led the NL with 120 walks and a .431 on-base percentage. He had 12 outfield assists. He became the first Giants player with 30 homers and 30 stolen bases in a season since his father, Bobby, did it in 1973.

Bonds, who was testy and defensive Monday in his first meeting of the year with reporters, accuses them of worshipping players such as Ken Griffey Jr.

"If you guys can put someone's stats with mine, then let me know who it is," he says. "If people want to say Junior is better than me, that's fine. But the stats are right there."

See BONDS Page 11B

N.C. Central signs California juco all-star

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

N.C. Central picked up some size for its offensive line by signing a junior college all-star from California.

The Eagles signed Dan Molina, a 6-3, 315-pound offensive lineman from Santa Barbara, Calif., to a football grant-in-aid. A transfer from Santa Barbara Community College, Molina is a two-time All-Western State Conference team. An all-California and all-America selection at Santa Barbara High, Molina was rated among the top 100 players in the west among high school seniors. He brings size and good blocking technique to Central's offensive line.

"Dan will be able to help our football team immediately," Central coach Larry Little said. "We need a big guy at left tackle to protect our quarterback's back. On film, he did a good job with pass blocking."

Playing for Little, a former Miami Dolphins guard and a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, means a chance to learn from the best, Molina said. Molina's father and uncle recalled Little's playing days, which helped influence his decision.

"A lot of other schools were interested in me, but I wanted to play for coach Little," Molina said. "I feel that I will learn things from him that other coaches would not be able to teach me."